

Tidal Shoreline Management Policies and Procedures Handbook

Final Report

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Product #1 Policies and Procedures for Tidal Shoreline Management

Product 1 was modified to make a significantly more robust and available product in the form of a new website dedicated to the delivery of shoreline management information. The Shoreline Management Handbook address is:

https://www.vims.edu/ccrm/wetlands_mgmt/handbook/index.php

The new handbook pages are found under the Wetlands Management tab on the CCRM website. The information ranges from broad concepts behind the passage of the original tidal wetlands protection legislation in 1972 to the current details of the permit application, the permit review process and being on a wetlands board.

The site is organized into pages with these categories:

- Background & Purpose
- Laws & Regulations
- Permit Information
- Being on a Board
- Conduct a Hearing
- Decision Support & Technical Guidance
- Restoration of Resilience
- Compliance & other Legal Information
- Know your Resources

The background and purpose section provides the rationale for tidal wetlands protection that prompted the passage of the Tidal Wetlands Act from the Virginia perspective. Wetland and shoreline habitat protection measure are also supported by the Constitution of Virginia and Virginia's Chesapeake Bay Commitments.

The often-confusing landscape of jurisdiction and laws is illustrated and explained under laws and regulations. Look in this section to find language in the Code of Virginia, legal definitions and local policy examples from localities that are seeking creative approaches to shoreline management.

Permit information explains the difference between a general permit and individual permit and provides details on what information is required for a permit to be considered complete and ready for advertisement and a public hearing. This section also provides links to the joint permit application, and current and historical permit record-keeping databases.

Information regarding responsibility, terms, requirements, board structure and more is found in the being on a board section.

Shoreline Management Handbook

everything wetlands boards ...



An ordered list of permit events and a description of what constitutes a public hearing is under the conduct a hearing tab. This area also describes how and why to hold an Executive Session (or closed meeting) and conduct a violation hearing for unpermitted actions in wetlands or for actions not in compliance with the permit. This section also provides a set of document templates for letters addressing all matters of notification from communicating a board decision to a restoration order. These templates may be downloaded and modified to suit.

The decision support and technical guidance section provides links to several different tools and map viewers developed to inform shoreline management decision-making including the Comprehensive Coastal Resources Management Portals (CCRMP), the Shoreline Management Model and the shoreline decision trees. Contact information for folks who can provide technical advice and answers questions are provided. There are also links to wetlands technical reports on wetlands and tidal resource ecosystem services and policy issues.

The restoration for resilience section looks at tidal shoreline resources from the perspective of restoration, creation or rehabilitation. What does it mean and what does it take to put back wetlands where that once were, or add newly created vegetated marsh area to an existing feature? Growing interest and activity in this field is spurred by the research on the co-benefits of vegetated marshes and other shoreline habitats for flood mitigation, water quality and habitat in addition to erosion protection and commitments to wetland restoration and water quality improvement. Cost-share and grant program information for coastal resilience projects is provided.

Once the permit is issued, what happens next? Resources on the compliance process including monitoring and inspections is found in the compliance and other legal information tab. This section includes brief summaries of relevant court cases and Attorney General opinions as well.

The final section on the page is know your resources. This section is a compilation of information including definitions, contact links and links to some of the other handbook pages. It includes a table of contents for the site (handbook contents) to help you navigate to the information of interest. It also includes some interesting frequently asked questions like those that staff at the Center hear all the time.

Product #2: Handbook delivery/ Dissemination

All the content of the handbook website was compiled and formatted to produce a print version report. A pdf version of the report was copied onto jump-drives. Each coastal locality was mailed 2 jump-drives in April, 2020. Accompanying the jump-drives was a hard copy of Rivers and Coast produced with support of the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program and NOAA under Task 6, Grant NA19NOS4190163 2019. The pdf report is also posted online for download.

Product #3: Handbook Outreach

VIMS had planned to give a face-to-face presentation of the new Handbook website at the annual VCZMP/NOAA supported Wetlands Workshop. The COVID 19 quarantine forced a postponement of the workshop originally planned for May 12, 2020. VIMS hopes to hold the workshop before the end of September. Additional complications regarding production of a webinar while the CCRM staff is required to work off-site, resulted in consideration of other ways to deliver and market the project.

VIMS opted for a combination of hard copy and digital reports, emailed newsletters and social media posts. VIMS highlighted the project in the annual Rivers and Coast publication, produced as hardcopy, which was mailed along with the pdf reports on jump-drives (Task 2). VIMS also posted about the report on the CCRM Facebook page and included the project in the CCRM e-news. The Virginia Coastal Policy Center also posted on their Facebook page and included the project in their May e-news. VIMS also made an effort to share the URL via email with Virginia organization including Wetlands Watch, Chesapeake Bay Foundation VA Aquarium, VA Chapter of American Planning Association, The Nature Conservancy VA Chapter, the VA Conservation Network, and the VA Natural Resources Leadership Institute. Both WW and the CBF have provided complements of the understandability and ease of use of the content.